

To: All staff

Subject: Duty of loyalty and freedom of expression

Given our current circumstances, I would like to remind you, as an employee of the Parks Canada Agency, of your obligations regarding public expression, whether through the media (including social media), large meetings or in other forums. This is of particular significance with respect to the streamlining measures announced in the most recent federal budget.

The purpose of this message is to provide you with the information you need to exercise your rights and fulfill your responsibilities as a Parks Canada Agency employee. This is an important issue because it involves respect for our fundamental values, our capacity to serve the public interest and Parks Canada team members' right to freedom of expression.

I am aware that during this time of significant transition, the concept of loyalty can have a very particular meaning. However, as employees of the public sector, our duty is to support the elected government. Here, in a nutshell, is what you need to know in order to make the best possible decisions for yourself and for the Agency:

- The duty of loyalty to the Agency is reflected in the Parks Canada Agency code of ethics and applies to all members of the Parks Canada team at all times. The duty of loyalty includes the duty to refrain from public criticism of the Government of Canada when speaking as an employee of the agency. Breaching the duty of loyalty may lead to disciplinary action.
- The duty of loyalty is not absolute, and open criticism may be acceptable under exceptional circumstances. To determine whether public criticism is acceptable, the duty of loyalty must be balanced against other interests, such as freedom of expression.
- Should you have any comments to make about the Agency or the Government of Canada as an employee of Parks Canada, you are strongly urged you to use internal mechanisms (grievances, disclosure of wrongdoing, etc.) to express your point of view or to communicate with your supervisor, human resources manager or the Parks Canada Ombudsman.
- Parks Canada has spokespersons who are designated to speak to the media. Should a journalist request your comments on a budget-related issue, suggest that the question be directed to your external relations manager.
- It is recognised by the Agency that some employees either are Union officers or are designated as spokespersons for the Union. The Agency understands that at times the Union may have a different perspective on either an action the Agency or the government of Canada takes. Employees who have been designated as spokesperson for the Union and are speaking in that capacity enjoy a much greater scope of freedom of expression.

I thank you for your attention to this matter and invite you to consult the [Parks Canada Agency's Code of Ethics](#). Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Chip Bird

Field Unit Superintendent

Cape Breton